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ABSTRACT

A study was done of the association between the psychological sense of school membership (PSSM) and measures of motivation and achievement among urban adolescents. The study was conducted among 301 students in 2 multi-ethnic urban junior high schools. African American, White, and Hispanic American students each comprised roughly one-third of the study participants. Data were collected through questionnaires that measured PSSM, friends' values, motivation in an expectancy-value approach, general school motivation, and effort/persistence ratings. The section measuring PSSM was an 18-item scale developed specifically for use with early and mid-adolescent students covering perceived liking, personal acceptance, and inclusion; respect for and encouragement of participation; and the perceived responses of other students. Two significant results are highlighted. The first finding is that even when controlling for the impact of the immediate peer group's values, a student's subjective sense of belonging appears to have a significant impact on several measures of motivation and on engaged and persistent effort in difficult academic work. The second finding is that both ethnic and gender differences may exist in the effects of social context influences on motivation. Included are 3 tables and 40 references. (JB)

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School Motivation, Engagement, and Sense of Belonging Among Urban Adolescent Students

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Abstract

Recent research focusing on school participation, persistence, and achievement among students at risk of school failure or withdrawal has indicated that students' sense of belonging or psychological membership may play an important role in promoting school success and preventing school dropout. The association between the psychological sense of school membership (PSSM) or belonging and measures of motivation and engagement were investigated among 301 students in two multi-ethnic urban junior high schools. African-American, White/Anglo, and Hispanic students each comprised roughly one-third of the study participants. No school or grade-level and very few ethnic group differences were found in scale means. School belonging (PSSM) was a significant predictor of several motivation-related measures--expectancies of success, valuing schoolwork, and general school motivation and interest--even after controlling for student reports of the academic values of their friends. School belonging was more highly associated with expectancies for success among Hispanic students than among Black students, and among girls than among boys. Effort, which was only minimally associated with school belonging, was better predicted by motivation measures.

School Motivation, Engagement, and Sense of Belonging Among Urban Adolescent Students

Recent research attention has been directed toward the social and contextual influences on school motivation and engagement. Specifically, there is a growing consensus that motivation is not a purely intrapsychic state, but rather one which grows out of a complex web of social and personal relationships which can either support or inhibit academic participation. This more social emphasis can be seen in work on cooperative learning (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Slavin, 1990), in recent attention to social interaction as a major source of cognitive development (Rogoff, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978), and in discussions of the value of supportive school "communities" (e.g., Carnegie Council, 1989).

A key element in all of these social processes is students' sense of psychological membership or belonging in the school or classroom, that is, the extent to which they feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment. Weiner, in his 1990 AERA Invited Address, specifically noted the need broaden the focus of motivational research beyond the individual self by including such constructs as "belonging." In his words, "School motivation cannot be understood apart from the social fabric in which it is embedded" (1990, p. 621).

Although doubtlessly the sense of school belonging and support are important for all students, they may be <u>crucial</u> to the academic survival of many at-risk students. In his review and reconceptualization of the dropout literature, Finn (1989) posited an "identification-participation" model to account for school retention among at-risk students. Basically, the model suggests that unless students identify with the school to at

least a minimal extent, unless they feel they belong as part of the school and believe themselves to be welcomed, respected, and valued by others there, they may begin the gradual disengagement process of which officially dropping out is only the final step. Finn's recent work (1992), using the NELS:88 data and investigating over five thousand 8th grade students who were identified as having one or more status characteristics (urban minority, low SES, or non-English home language) which put them statistically at risk of school failure, found that some dimensions of belonging -- in particular the students' perceptions of teacher support--were predictive of a number of measures of school participation and engagement.

Wehlage (1989), discussing schools with a record of success with at-risk students, used the term "school membership" to refer to a construct almost identical to Finn's "belonging". Psychological school membership, to Wehlage, is not simply technical enrollment, but rather students' perceptions that others in the school, especially adults, are "for" them, and that they count in the school. Several fascinating ethnographic studies (Farrell, 1990; Fine, 1991; Wehlage, Smith, Rutter, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989; see also Kagan, 1990) have also highlighted ways in which students perceive (or unfortunately often fail to perceive) the school as a personally supportive community. In Wehlage's model, students' sense of psychological school membership is a critical contributor to a commitment to schooling and to the valuing of education. Similarly, Berends (1992) investigated the perceived support of teachers and friends as important influences on what he termed "school bonding," the belief that school was personally worthwhile and that it was important to be engaged in the educational process.

Early adolescence is a developmental period in which school belonging, psychological membership, and the socioemotional support of teachers and other students are likely to have an

especially significant influence on motivation and engagement. The Carnegie Council's Turning Points (1989), in fact, called for school "communities for learning (with) stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers" (p. 9) as its first major recommendation for improving early adolescent education. Unfortunately, some evidence suggests that at the very developmental stage when support may be most important, it often decreases in school settings (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989), especially as students move into large, relatively impersonal, bureaucratically controlled junior high schools. It has been suggested that the effects of low support or a weak sense of belonging may be especially troublesome for ethnic minority students (Steele, 1992) and for girls.

Despite the likelihood that a sense of belonging, support, or psychological membership (the terms are used interchangeably in this paper) in school is an important contributor to school motivation and active engagement, especially among early adolescents and especially among students who have status characteristics that may put them at risk of school dropout, little careful empirical work has examined the relationship between belonging and motivation in much detail. Although it has been frequently found that friends--that is, the student's personally chosen peer group and individual friends, who may or may not be schoolmates--exert an influence on student aspirations and achievement (e.g., Steinberg, 1990), the relative influence of personal friends and of the more global "people in this school" has not been investigated. Students have multiple and overlapping group and category memberships (Schlechty, 1976), and may be influenced by different membership or reference groups in different ways. Whether or not a solid sense of membership in, and support from, the school community in general (especially including teachers and other adults in the school) may be sufficient to outweigh the influence of the

student's individual friends or immediate peer group in determining school motivation and engagement is an important issue to consider. This is an especially important question for some groups, for example the Black students as described by Signithia Fordham (1988), who may belong to personal friendship groups holding norms inconsistent with academic engagement (see also Steinberg, 1990).

This paper discusses the result of a study conducted in two multi-ethnic urban junior high schools, focusing in particular on the association between students' sense of psychological membership in the school and their academic motivation. In particular, the study investigated the hypotheses that students' sense of belonging in school would be significantly associated with measures of school satisfaction, expectations of academic success, valuing of academic work, and persistence in difficult tasks. It was further hypothesized that these effects of school belonging would be significant even after controlling for the influence of peer or friends' values. Although no directional hypotheses were made regarding ethnic or gender differences in psychological membership, in motivation, or in the strength of association between the two, these issues were also investigated.

Method

Participants and Procedures.

The study was conducted in a largely working-class middle-sized city in the Northeast. The city itself has large Hispanic and Black (African-American) populations; the average per capita income in the city places it in the bottom quartile of the state. Two (of six) 7-9 junior high schools in the city were contacted and agreed to participate in the study. Although the area's three high schools draw their student body from the city as a whole and are differentiated on the basis of curriculum, at the time this research was conducted, the student

population in each of the junior high schools was assigned on the basis of residence in one of several educational "zones."

The procedures and participants differed slightly by school. In School 1, a randomly chosen half of the student body participated in the study by filling out a questionnaire administered in homeroom. (The other students completed a different questionnaire at this time, one focused on belonging and motivation in specific academic classes. See Goodenow, 1992) One hundred and ninety-eight students in the first school completed the survey; 104 were boys and 87 were girls (9 did not indicate gender). The largest group of students identified themselves as African-American or Black (n = 89; 45% of the total); 32 (16%) identified themselves as Hispanic; 66 (33%) were White; two (1%) were Asian; and nine did not indicate any ethnic identification. Student ages ranged from 12 to 16, averaging 13.80 years of age (SD=.996); they included 74 7th grade students, 79 eighth grade students, and 45 ninth grade students.

In School 2, only 7th grade students participated. As with the first school, half of all seventh graders completed the questionnaire that formed the basis of this study, while the other half completed an alternative survey. The 103 participants included 54 boys and 43 girls (6 no answer), with an average age of 13.11 years (SD=.89) The student population was largely Hispanic (77 students, 16 of whom completed the questionnaire in Spanish), 7 Black or African-American students, 16 White/Anglo students, and one Asian-American. Two students did not indicate ethnicity.

The attendance rate for relevant students on the testing date, a Wednesday in May, was approximately 73%. School personnel indicated that this was not unusually low, especially late in the school year.

Measures.

The Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSM) was the primary measure of the subjective sense of belonging in school. This 18-item scale was developed specifically for use with early and mid-adolescent students (For scale development and validity information, see Goodenow, in press-b). In particular, items were included which involved not only perceived liking, personal acceptance, and inclusion (e.g., "Most teachers at this school are interested in me") but also respect and encouragement for participation (e.g., "People here notice when I'm good at something"), and involved the perceived response of other students (e.g., "Other students in this school take my opinions seriously") as well as of teachers and other school personnel. Items were also included which tapped students' sense of belonging or being a part of the school in general (e.g., "I feel like a real part of this school"). Unlike school climate measures, all items were phrased in terms of a personal, individual frame of reference rather than asking for students' judgments about the general supportiveness of the school. Also, in order to avoid the development of a 'response set' on the part of students, approximately one third of the items were phrased in a negative direction. Items used a five-point Likert format, with choices ranging from "not at all true" (1) to "completely true (5), and were then averaged for a scale score. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for this sample was .803 for the English language version and .771 for the Spanish translation.

Friends' Values. In order to assess the influence on motivation of students' personal friendship network or self-chosen peer group (as opposed to the influence of school belonging in general), students were asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "My friends think that it is important to do well in school." This item is similar to one

used by Berends (1992) in investigating the effects of peer support on school bonding.

Motivation-related measures. An expectancy-value approach to motivation was taken, that is, an approach based on the assumption that motives to engage in achievement-related behavior are a joint function of the expectation that such behavior will be successful and the value attached to that success. Thus, school motivation was assessed by two short scales--a five-item scale concerning the students' expectancies regarding success in schoolwork and a six-item scale concerning the intrinsic value, interest, and importance students attributed to academic schoolwork. Both of these scales were shortened versions of scales from used by Pintrich and DeGroot (1990) in studying motivation in junior high school students.

General School Motivation. While the Expectancy and Value scales focused very specifically on academic schoolwork, the questionnaire also included a four-item School Motivation measure which tapped students' more general sense that being in school was satisfying, worthwhile and important for them, rather than boring or irrelevant. This measure was a shortened version of Ford and Tisak's (1982) School Motivation Scale, and is quite similar to the "School Bonding" measure employed by Berends (1992) as an outcome of social support.

Effort/Persistence. Finally, two items asked students to rate the extent to which they put forth effort and persisted despite difficulties in their schoolwork. These items do not capture the full range of school participation and engagement displayed by committed and successful students; rather, they target behaviors most likely to suffer and decline if students become too discouraged or alienated from the schooling process.

Results

Descriptive Statistics. Since these data were obtained from a single city but from two different junior high schools, the

first step in data analysis was to compare school means. There were no significant differences between the schools on any of the scales; all subsequent analyses combine these into a single urban sample.

As can be seen in Table 1, on average students scored well above the 3.0 scale midpoint on measures of Expectancy, Value, and Effort. For the most part, these students claim to expect to do well in their classes, say that what they are studying is more interesting and important than not, and assert that they keep trying hard in their schoolwork even when faced with difficulties. It is interesting to note as well that whereas students agree that they personally value schoolwork and put forth effort, they are far less likely to assert that their friends think that doing well in school is important.

Insert Table 1 about here

Measures of the psychological sense of school membership and of the general level of school motivation present a different picture. When responding to questions not focused on academic work per se but on reactions to the school as a whole, students are less positive. The average score on the PSSM is only slightly above the 3.0 scale midpoint. In fact 41% (n = 124) of the students were more inclined to disagree than agree that they felt they belonged and were supported by others in the school. Forty percent (n = 122), similarly, expressed a general dissatisfaction and lack of motivation with school in general. The general picture, then, is of relatively high academic motivation, but a far weaker sense of attachment to the school as a whole. Differences between each of the academic expectancy, value, and effort measures on the one hand and students' personal sense of school belonging and general school motivation or satisfaction on the other were statistically significant.

(It may also be important to note that although these urban adolescents had scores on the Expectancy and Value measures that were quite comparable to those found in a similar study with middle-class suburban students (Goodenow, in press-a), their scores on PSSM were strikingly and significantly lower (Goodenow, in press-b). The urban students appeared to be no less motivated -- at least as motivation was assessed in terms of self-reported expectancies and values -- but they expressed far lower levels of social and personal connection to others in the school and a lower belief that others in the school were "for" them than did suburban students.)

Group differences in scale means were also investigated. There were no significant differences in terms of grade-level (7th, 8th, 9th) on any of the scales. Several gender differences did appear: girls were more likely than boys to say that their friends thought that doing well in school was important (3.18 vs. 2.77, $t = 2.45$, $p < .05$) and to express higher levels of general school motivation and satisfaction (3.12 vs. 2.90, $t = 2.05$, $p. < .05$). Girls also had a significantly higher sense of psychological membership in their school (3.20 vs. 3.03, $t = 2.08$, $p. < .05$).

Few ethnic differences were evident. No differences among Black, White, and Hispanic students appeared in school motivation, in expectancies for school success, in value of academic work, or in friends' values. Also, when the two schools were analyzed together, there were no ethnic differences in subjective sense of school membership (PSSM), although when the second school was considered by itself, Hispanic students (75% of the student body) did express a greater sense of belonging than did non-Hispanic students (3.16 vs. 2.89, $t = 2.01$, $p. < .05$). In the other school, where no single ethnic group had a clear numerical majority, there were no significant differences between ethnic groups in terms of psychological membership. Only one significant ethnic difference was found

for the combined sample: Hispanic students were less likely than Black or White/Anglo students (3.42 vs. 3.64 and 3.85, $F(2,284)=4.07$, $p. < 05$) to assert that they tried hard to do well in school, although they were far more likely to say they did exert effort than that they did not.

Correlational Analyses. The particular focus of this study was on ways in which psychological membership might be associated with academic motivation and effort. As can be seen in Table 2, all other measures were significantly correlated with PSSM. In particular, PSSM was more highly correlated with general School Motivation and with Value than were any of the other measures. It should also be noted that the correlation between PSSM and Effort/Persistence, although significant, was quite small: PSSM can be seen as contributing less than 2% of the variance ($r^2 = .0144$) in this self-reported behavior measure.

Insert Table 2 about here

Of special interest, given common assumptions about the impact of the adolescent peer group on students' academic values and engagement, is the finding that Friends' Values (that is, the belief that one's friends think that it is important to do well in school) had less to do with Expectancy, Value, and general School Motivation than did PSSM, the sense that teachers and schoolmates in general were supportive and accepting, that one belonged and had a respected place in the school. Also surprisingly, the importance that a student believed his or her friends attached to schoolwork had no significant association with that student's own willingness to work hard or persist at schoolwork.

Partial Correlations: Controlling for Friends' Values. To look in more detail at the association between the social/contextual variables (PSSM and Friends' Values) and the

motivational measures, partial correlations were computed. Even after controlling for Friends' Values, PSSM significantly predicted Expectancy (r = .347, $p < .001$), the Value of academic work (r = .464, $p < .001$), general School Motivation (r = .418, $p < .001$) and Effort/Persistence (r = .121, $p < .05$). Although the belief that one's friends do not value doing well in school may counteract the influence of general school belonging to a slight extent, friends' values by no means override the stronger influence of the psychological sense of membership and of perceived support from teachers and others in the school.

Predicting Effort. The very small association between PSSM and Effort was initially puzzling (as was the absence of association between Friends' Values and Effort), since PSSM had been more strongly associated with other motivation measures. One explanation was that engaged effort or persistence, instead of being an attitudinal construct, is in fact a self-report measure of actual behavior. Logically, then, Effort could be seen as a possible result of motivation, rather than as a direct measure of motivation itself. To better understand influences on Effort/Persistence, a stepwise multiple regression equation was calculated, using both social measures (PSSM and Friends' Values) and all three motivation-related measures (Expectancy, Value, and School Motivation) as predictors. In the final equation Effort was predicted by Expectancy (R = .419) on Step 1, Value (R = .436, Adjusted R^2 = .182) on Step 2, and Friends' Values (R = .453, Adjusted R^2 = .197) on Step 3. These three predictors, taken together, accounted for nearly one-fifth of the variance in Effort. Final Beta weights for Expectancy, Value, and Friends' Values were .353, .187, and -.134 respectively, indicating that once variance shared with the student's own ratings of academic Expectancy and Value was removed, Friends' Values actually had a negative impact on Effort.

Ethnic and gender differences in the impact of psychological membership. Even though there had been few differences in scale means between Black, Hispanic, and White/Anglo students, it was plausible that the relative importance of psychological membership and friends' values might be different for students in different ethnic groups and different for boys than for girls. Several results emerged when correlations between the social variables (PSSM and Friends' Values) and the motivation measures were calculated separately for separate ethnic groups and for the two genders. (See Table 3, below.) First, it is clear that in no case did Friends' Values have a higher level of association with outcome measures than did more general school belonging. Second, for both measures of specifically academic motivation, Expectancy and Value, the level of association with PSSM and with Friends' Values was stronger for Hispanic than for Black students, though significantly so only for Expectancy. Third, Expectancy was more highly correlated with PSSM for girls than for boys; PSSM and Friends' Values relationship to Value was also higher for girls, though again not significantly so.

Insert Table 3 about here

As with the total sample, partial correlations were computed between PSSM and the motivation measures, controlling for Friends' Values. While the correlations dropped slightly (differences between simple and partial correlations ranged from .01 to .11) when the effects of Friends' Values were partialled out, the overall pattern of correlations remained the same.

Also as with the total sample, multiple regression equations predicting Effort were derived separately for the three ethnic groups and two genders. Because of the smaller sample size among these subgroups, in all cases but one only a single predictor emerged. Expectancy was the sole predictor of Effort for Black students (R = .332), White/Anglo students (R =

570), and girls ($\underline{R}$ = .407), and Value was the sole predictor for Hispanic students ($\underline{R}$ = .332). Only for boys were there multiple predictors: stepwise regression procedures found Expectancy ($\underline{R}$ = .422, Adjusted R^2 = .172), Value (R = .458, Adjusted R^2 = .199), PSSM ($\underline{R}$ = .491, Adjusted $\underline{R}^2$ = .225), and School Motivation ($\underline{R}$ = .521, Adjusted $\underline{R}^2$ = .251). Beta weights in the final equation were .357 (Expectancy), .269 (Value), -.277 (PSSM) and .197 (School Motivation). Thus, while boys' effort is substantially influenced by motivation, some aspect of school belonging that does not share common variance with Expectancy, Value, and School Motivaton, had an apparently negative effect.

Discussion

Two significant results have emerged from this study of psychological school membership and motivation among urban junior high school students. The first is that, even controlling for the impact of the immediate peer group's or personal friends' values, a student's subjective sense of belonging in the school -- of being liked, included, respected by teachers and others in the school -- appears to have a significant impact on several measures of motivation, and through motivation on engaged and persistent effort in difficult academic work. The second is that there may be both ethnic and gender differences in the effects of social context influences on motivation. These findings are considered in turn.

It is important to acknowledge that relationships between psychological membership or the sense of belonging and support, on the one hand, and motivation and engaged effort on the other are undoubtedly reciprocal. As students feel themselves to be full and valued members of the school, they are willing to put forth more effort and to commit themselves more fully to the purposes of the school. Conversely, as they are more fully engaged and successful, they are accorded more acceptance and respect from others in the school. Psychological membership and

motivation to put for effort may be so intertwined that it is difficult to say that one is the cause and other the effect. As a way of talking about educational intervention, however, it is useful to begin with membership. If we can think of belonging or membership as influencing motivation, how might this be so?

First, given the findings that psychological membership is significantly associated with expectations of success, what might be the processes involved? As Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, and Dornbusch (1982) noted, people are not simply effective or efficacious in general, they are effective within a specific context. To the extent that students believe that others within an environment are rooting for them, are on their side and willing to help them if necessary, they can believe that they have the resources necessary to be successful. Expecting to be academically successful, then, is not only a matter of students' sense of their own individual abilities, but also of their sense of the supportive resources--the help and encouragement of others--that they can bring to bear.

Second, psychological membership or belonging in school can be assumed to have an influence on the valuing of academic work. Years ago, Maslow (1964) proposed that meeting the need for belonging was a necessary precondition to higher needs such as the desire for knowledge. Recent research on motivation by Ryan, Connell, Deci and their colleagues (Connell & Wellborn, 1990; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Ryan & Powelson, 1991) posits a model of increasing internalization of values. To the extent that people (especially children or adolescents) feels themselves to be related, connected, an important part of a group or set of others, then they should progressively be likely to internalize the values of those others. Ryan and Stiller (1991) suggest that

> Authentic contact with others appears to play a crucial role in connecting individuals to social tasks and promoting and internalization of valued goals.

> Primarily, one identifies with and emulates the practices of those to whom one is, or might desire to be, attached. (p. 121)

Eventually, we could hope, the value of learning and knowledge become thoroughly internalized and perceived as part of the self. For that to happen, however, these values must first be supported by others to whom one is connected. Especially among students for whom family or neighborhood do not provide academic supports, a sense of belonging and membership in the school and a sense of warm personal connection to teachers and others in school may be essential for the development and maintenance of academic motivation.

In the data reported here, Friends' Values--the students' belief that their friends thought schoolwork to be important--was strikingly less predictive of motivation than was the more general PSSM. School belonging or psychological membership remained a significant predictor of measures of motivation even after the effects of friends' values were partialed out. Given the widely shared belief in the important influence of peer groups and friends on academic achievement, how could this be so? One possibility, of course, is that the single-item measure of friends' values is insufficiently precise in tapping the full range of effects that friends have on adolescents' achievement-related motives and behaviors. It will be important in future research to include other more detailed measures, for example by adding questions about friends' commitment to studying and trying hard, friends' own educational aspirations, and friends' reactions to their own and to the students' academic successes and failures.

On the other hand, the results presented here do clearly suggest that within school contexts and with regard to academic motivation, the general sense of belonging and support in a school can in some ways "override" the influence of a student's personal friendship group. Young adolescents remain open to

influence from many different sources and groups. A school that can function (either as a whole or as a set of smaller teams) to create a sense of community where early adolescent students feel personally known, personally important, and personally encouraged to have a voice and to be active participants can serve as an influence potentially more powerful than the influence of individual dyadic or clique ties.

The differential importance of psychological membership for different groups deserves consideration. Although the differences between Hispanic and Black students were significant only for Expectancy, with Hispanic students having the strongest links between belonging and expectations for success and Black students the weakest, these results were also obtained in the parallel study with the same student population focusing at the individual academic class level (Goodenow, 1992). Similarly, gender differences in the impact of belonging were also found in the classroom study, as well as in a similar investigation with a middle-class suburban sample (Goodenow, in press-a).

The finding of ethnic differences in the effects of school membership emphasizes the importance of going beyond the general category of "ethnic minority" in attempting to understand school motivation and to focus on differences in culture and life experience.

In considering just the Hispanic students, one influence at work in creating the especially high link between belonging and motivation may be the importance that most Hispanic cultures attach to communal and affiliative as opposed to individualistic values. Other research has reported this emphasis. Garza and Santos (1991), for example, found that especially when in the majority in small groups, Hispanic students preferred to do tasks in a cooperative fashion. McCool (1984) reported that Hispanic undergraduates exhibited a cooperative, affiliative orientation to college as opposed to the more competitive or individualistic orientations of other students. Similarly, Abi-

Nader (1990) emphasized the value of building a supportive school community for Hispanic high school students. To the extent that solidarity with the group and participation with others are valued, then a strong sense of group membership and belonging in schools should in turn foster the valuing of academic activities and goals and the expectation that others will be helpful in reaching those goals. This link between belonging and motivation is especially important to consider given the especially high dropout rate of Hispanic students; Pitsch (1991), for example reports a 1989 Hispanic high school graduation rate of only 56%, as compared to 76% for Blacks and 83% for Whites during the same time period.

The distinctive experience of African-American students is also important to consider. Although at first glance the comparatively low correlations between psychological membership and motivation among Black students was puzzling, this result may make sense if seen in terms of a somewhat greater level of skepticism or distrust among Black students than among others. White (1980), for example, suggested in his discussion of Black psychology that African-American parents may feel the necessity of explicitly teaching their children ways of resisting discrimination and prejudice. Specifically, Black children may be encouraged not to rely overmuch on the opinions of others, especially negative opinions of themselves and their abilities that they might encounter in schools. To the extent that Black children develop a relative independence of judgment about their own abilities and values and a wariness about others' views (especially the views of White authorities), then they may simply care less about whether or not they belong and are valued in the social context of the school (see note a)

More surprising--especially in light of findings by Fordham (1989), Steinberg (1990) and others concerning the strong (but sometimes anti-academic) influence of Black peer groups on Black students--are the low correlations found here

between friends' values and motivation measures. One explanation may lie in age-related or developmental differences: only high school students were the participants in both Fordham's ethnographic study and in the massive data set collected by Steinberg and his colleagues, whereas the participants in the present research were all in junior high school. Perhaps Black junior high students hold expectations for academic success that are more individual and less influenced by ethnic identification and solidarity than may be true later on in high school. On the other hand it may also be that factors completely unrelated to social ties or belonging may have a stronger influence on the academic influence of African-American students: Magaletta and Fenzel (1992), for example, have suggested that academic self-concept and global self-worth play an important part in motivation with this population. In any case, it is important to note that the absolute levels of belonging, motivation, and effort were not lower for Blacks than for other students, only that less of the variance in motivation was explained for Black students than for others. Steele (1992) has recently proposed a comprehensive social model for multiple influences on the motivation of African-American students; clearly far more research is needed on how academic attitudes and behaviors develop among these young people.

The observed gender difference in the strength of association between school belonging and expectancies of academic success parallels results obtained in the classroom-focused study with this same population (Goodenow, 1992) and in a similar study conducted in a suburban middle school (Goodenow, in press-a). Several interpretations can be proposed for the special influence of belonging and support for girls. It has been suggested that interpersonal relationships in general are of greater importance to girls than to boys (Gilligan, 1982). A more specific approach suggests that especially in early adolescence, at a developmental stage in which gender-role

norms are increasing in their strength and influence, much pressure exists for girls to adopt more stereotypically "feminine" and passive behaviors rather than to pursue academic work with any vigor. In this developmental context, the support and encouragement of others in the school, especially the support and interest of teachers, can serve to counteract other influences. Although the present study does not differentiate sources of support or individual interpersonal relationships within the general construct of school belonging, Goodenow (in press-a) identified teacher support in particular as the major predictor of academic motivation for middle school girls. Whatever the underlying dynamics of motivation, the results presented here suggest that school and classroom factors that foster interpersonal support and community may be especially helpful to girls.

Some caveats about the present research project must be mentioned. Correlational research with cross-sectional data, especially self-report data, has some serious limitations. Clearly, actual measures of classroom behavior, such as might be collected through an observational study or from ratings of teachers, would enhance our ability to draw conclusions about the relationship between psychological membership, motivation, and classroom engagement. Going one step further and tying these measures to actual academic achievement would be important as well. Equally if not more important, especially considering schools like these, where average daily attendance is low and where enormous numbers of students fail to complete high school (in this city, the dropout rate is approximately one-third of the students), longitudinal studies tracking the effect of psychological membership on attending and staying in school may be highly useful.

To summarize, this study has presented evidence to suggest that psychological membership may have a substantial influence on students' school motivation. This suggests that programs

explicitly designed to foster a sense of belonging to a school community may not be just "misplaced warm fuzziness" (Ryan & Stiller, 1991) but a vital part of keeping many students in school and promoting academic engagement, motivation, and ultimately achievement. Many developments in instructional methods, such as cooperative learning (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1991) or reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) are likely to foster a sense of belonging, as are many whole-school efforts such as interdisciplinary teaching teams and homeroom advisory systems. Whatever the contributors to an increased sense of belonging, we need to recognize that the result of a failure to attain a full and legitimate sense of membership in the school as a social system may, for many students, be lowered motivation, less active engagement, and ultimately diminished academic achievement or even school withdrawal.

Note a: I am indebted to my colleague, Dorice J.G. Wright, for first suggesting this interpretation.

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Table1: Means and Standard Deviations for All Measures.

	MEAN	SD
PSSM: Psychological Sense of School Membership	3.10	.68
Friends' Academic Values	3.05	1.39
Expectancy of School Success	3.80	.85
Value of Academic Work	3.59	.92
School Motivation/Satisfaction	3.01	.89
Effort/Persistence	3.61	1.01

Table 2: Intercorrelations of PSSM, Friends' Values, Motivation, and Effort.

	PSSM	Friends	Expectancies	Value.	School Mot	Effort
PSSM	-					
Friends' Values	.44***	-				
Expectancies	.42***	.24***	-			
Value of Schoolwork	.55***	.37***	.54***	-		
School Motivation	.46***	.21***	.30***	.38***	-	
Effort/Persistence	.12*	.02	.41***	.31***	.22***	-

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 3

Correlations of Psychological Membership and Friends' Values with Motivational and Effort Outcomes, by Ethnic and Gender Groups.

	Expectancy	Value	SchMot.	Effort
Psychological Membership				
Black Ss (n = 96)	.267[a]	.443	.465	.082ns
Hispanic Ss (n = 109)	.503[b]	.625	.409	.107ns
White/Anglo (n = 82)	.457	.571	.549	.151ns
Boys (n = 158)	.271[a]	.538	. 438	.059ns
Girls (n = 130)	.531[b]	.550	.459	.148ns
Friends' Values				
Black Ss (n = 94)	.077ns [a]	.310	.185	.062ns
Hispanic Ss (n - 105)	.353 [b]	.395	.250	.082ns
White/Anglo (n = 80)	.179ns	.346	.219ns	-.018ns
Boys (n = 151)	.159 ns	.311	.179	.025ns
Girls (n = 128)	.270	.370	.185	-.031ns

All correlations are significant at $p < .05$ or less unless noted by ns.

a, b Fisher's r to z transformation was used to compare correlation strengths. Within each ethnic or gender comparison group, correlations followed by different letters are significantly different at at least $p < .05$